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Educating the Emotions from Gradgrind to Goleman

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Abstract

Charles Dickens famously satirised the rationalism and mechanism of utilitarian educational ideas through the figure of Mr Gradgrind in *Hard Times*. Even in the nineteenth century there were very few people, in reality, who would have agreed that the education of children should be a matter of purely intellectual, rather than emotional, instruction. The surge of interest in emotional intelligence and emotional literacy since the 1990s has given this topic new currency but, on all sides of the debate, it is mistakenly assumed that the idea of educating the emotions is something new. The present article retrieves one part of the forgotten history of emotional education by examining nineteenth-century British discussions about the proper places of passion, feeling and emotion in the classroom, in the context of debates about utilitarianism, religion and the role of the state. The views of educationalists and philosophers, including Samuel Wilderspin and John Stuart Mill, are considered and compared with more recent policy debates about 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning'. The article concludes by asking: Who are the Gradgrinds today?

Keywords

intellect; emotion; Victorian; Samuel Wilderspin; John Stuart Mill; utilitarianism; emotional intelligence; SEAL

Introduction: The culture of the heart

'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them.' So begins Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, first published in 1854. The speaker is Mr Thomas Gradgrind, politician and businessman of Coketown, somewhere in the northern manufacturing districts of England. Dickens's tragicomic caricature of a narrow-minded utilitarian has remained lodged in our collective imagination ever since as a symbol of the dire consequences of excluding emotion and imagination from the classroom.

Even contemporary readers of Dickens doubted whether any such woefully unfeeling classrooms existed in reality. The *Westminster Review* wrote in 1854: 'If there are Gradgrind schools, they are not sufficiently numerous to be generally known' (Appendix B to Dickens 1999, 336). And in the twenty-first century, it would surely be impossible to find a teacher repeating Gradgrind's mistakes. Educators have learned about the importance of developing in children such newly minted mental capabilities as 'emotional literacy', 'emotional well-being' and 'emotional resilience'. Many have read works such as Daniel Goleman's international bestseller, first published in 1995, *Emotional intelligence*, including

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its final chapter on ‘Schooling the Emotions’. National governments, private consultants, educational think-tanks, and charities all now promote an idea of education with emotion at its heart. In the United Kingdom, the government, in the early twenty-first century, started to put increasing emphasis on ‘Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning’ (SEAL) at both primary and secondary school levels. Sir Jim Rose, in his *Independent review of the primary curriculum* (2009), expressed the hope that the new curriculum would help children develop ‘social and emotional skills’ such as managing their own feelings and becoming aware of the feelings of others, and that it would thus promote ‘emotional and economic wellbeing’ as well as ‘physical, mental and emotional health’. In its most recent phase, the promotion of emotional education has included discussions of the application of ‘Positive Psychology’ to educational contexts (Nussbaum 2008; Scoffham and Barnes 2011).

Among contemporary educationalists, some think that schooling is now in danger of becoming over-emotional, while others want to see emotional intelligence, resilience, well-being, and the rest established in a still stronger position. Supporters of the emotional curriculum, suggesting that the time has finally come for feelings and emotions to be given their due in the modern classroom, have based their arguments on a range of sources, including philosophy (Dunlop 1984; Best 1988), feminist politics (Boler 1999; Blackmorea 2011), evolutionary psychology (Spendlove 2008), and affective neuroscience (Goleman 1996; Hyland 2011). Opponents bemoan these innovations as evidence of a move away from an education centred around subject-based knowledge towards what has been called a ‘curriculum of the self’; an academically less rigorous regime, fostering introspection and emotional neediness (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009; Ecclestone 2011).What is generally taken for granted on both sides is that a belief in the central importance of the emotions to education is something new. It is not.

Lord Kames, in his *Loose hints upon education, chiefly concerning the culture of the heart* (1781) regretted that earlier educational theorists, with the partial exception of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had tended to focus on the head at the expense of the heart: ‘From Aristotle down to Locke, books without number have been composed for cultivating and improving the understanding: few in proportion for cultivating and improving the affections’ (Kames 1781, 14–15). From the early nineteenth century, this would become a less plausible complaint. As we shall see below, the Infant School movement pioneered a form of education based on love and affection from the 1820s onwards, and in 1829 the *Quarterly Review* asserted that ‘The first eight to ten years of life should be devoted to the education of the heart – to the formation of principles, rather than to the acquirement of what is usually termed knowledge’, since in childhood the ‘emotions are liveliest and most easily moulded’, and later life will present ‘an infinity of occasions where it is essential to happiness that we should feel rightly; very few where it is necessary that we should think profoundly’ (Anon. 1829, 176–7). Three of the most influential mid-Victorian writers, Charles Dickens, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, all advocated emotional education between the 1830s and 1870s. The pre-Raphaelite John Lucas Tupper published a book (1869) arguing that the emotional side of children’s development was the ‘void in modern education’, and recommending more art education as an urgent antidote, while the campaigner and journalist Frances Power Cobbe wrote an article on ‘The Education of the Emotions’ (1888), addressing herself to questions of parenting, religion, schools, universities, and public

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ceremonies. The importance of the emotions to education continued to be endlessly forgotten and rediscovered throughout the twentieth century. Emotions were the focus of one of the most influential texts of the mental-hygiene movement in America (Prescott 1938; Boler 1999, 50–3), and featured prominently in two important UK government reports into primary education (Hadow 1931; Plowden 1967; Wooldridge 2006). Yet some educationalists still felt that emotions were being overlooked (Beatty 1969; Yarlott 1972). Even in the 1980s David Best wrote of the ‘extraordinary neglect of the education of the emotions’ (1988, 239), as did Megan Boler a decade after that, interpreting the history of education in terms of a patriarchal anti-emotionalism, several years into the post-Goleman era (1999, xxiv), and two centuries after Rousseau and Kames.

Hopefully some appreciation of the history of ideas about emotional education will save future educationalists from having to rediscover the emotions all over again. The present article offers a sketch of one part of that history, using nineteenth-century British sources. Although the history of emotional education can be traced back to much earlier periods (Bantock 1986), the concern with schooling children’s feelings, passions and emotions in the classroom took on its modern form in the nineteenth century, in the context of debates about utilitarianism, religion and the role of the state in monitoring, designing and ultimately providing education, especially for the children of the working classes.

The varieties of emotional schooling promoted and practised in the nineteenth century, and the utilitarianism and rote-learning they were reacting against, are examined below through the writings of a range of figures, including the pioneer of the infant school movement, Samuel Wilderspin, and the philosopher John Stuart Mill. In the concluding sections, turning to developments connected with the landmark Elementary Education Act of 1870, I argue that the linguistic and conceptual shifts from Victorian ideas about moral and religious education to modern scientific and managerial concepts of social and emotional skills and competencies, reveal a complex process of secularisation and demoralisation of educational thought and practice. This process needs to be acknowledged and understood if progress is to be made in contemporary policy debates.

Utilitarianism: Men without bowels

Of what actual tendencies in nineteenth-century education was *Hard Times* a satire? Obviously the ultra-utilitarian school in Coketown, with its hard-headed and hard-hearted Gradgrind principles, implemented by a schoolmaster called Mr M’Choakumchild, were comic creations. But contemporary reviewers recognised in this caricature some semblance of reality. Among Dickens’s various targets, the two most prominent were the philosophy of utilitarianism, with its economic doctrine of self-interest and its mania for measurement, and the practice of mechanical rote-learning in schools. Mr Gradgrind’s beliefs about education were, first, that reason as opposed to imagination ‘is the only faculty to which education should be addressed’ (56–7), secondly that education should be characterised by the accumulation of useful facts rather than the cultivation of idle fancies and, finally and most generally, that anything useful could be measured and quantified. Gradgrind applied the same principles to the raising of his own children, accordingly excluding fairy-tales and nursery rhymes from their childhood reading. The keynote of this philosophy was the

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exclusion of wonder: ‘Bring to me, says M’Choakumchild, yonder baby just able to walk, and I will engage that it shall never wonder’. The exclusion of wonder was the ‘spring of the mechanical art and mystery of educating the reason without stooping to the cultivation of the sentiments and affections’ (86). Dickens suggests the likely outcome of such an education by the unhappy fates that await the Gradgrind children. Young Tom is apprehended for thieving by Bitzer, previously considered by Gradgrind a model pupil. Desperately begging Bitzer to release his son rather than deliver him over to the authorities, Gradgrind asks him whether he has a heart. Bitzer replies factually: ‘No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt that I have a heart.’ Gradgrind then asks whether this heart is accessible ‘to any compassionate influence’. Bitzer’s unfanciful reply is that his heart is accessible to reason and to nothing else (305).

Some readers, at least, thought that Dickens’s attack on the utilitarians had hit the mark. ‘As to the picture of the economical school,’ wrote the *British Quarterly Review*, ‘who see the whole duty of man in buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, we believe that there are not a few of them fully as bad as the picture here given of them. They are men without bowels’ (Appendix B to Dickens 1999, 331). Two of the leading utilitarian philosophers of earlier generations who might have been thought to merit this designation were the ‘philosophical radicals’ Jeremy Bentham and his most important disciple, James Mill. Their philosophy was based on the cultivation of reason and its rigorous application to the social problem of how to define, measure and maximise happiness (Schofield 2006). In the realm of education, Bentham and Mill worked together on a treatise called *Chrestomathia*, published in its final form in 1817 (Bentham 1983; Cumming 1961, 1962, 1971). The term ‘chrestomathic’ meant ‘conducive to useful learning’ and the work set out a curriculum and teaching methods to be used in schools for the children of the ‘middling and higher ranks in life’. It was an adaptation of the existing ‘Lancasterian’ monitorial system, according to which younger children were taught by older children, all under the direction of a single schoolmaster (Smith and Burston 1983). Bentham and Mill thought that up to 600 boys could be taught in a single schoolroom by this method, arranged in concentric rows of desks, with the master installed at the centre on a revolving chair (Cumming 1961, 22). The chrestomathic curriculum was a scheme of strictly intellectual training, explicitly excluding moral and religious instruction, music, the fine arts, and literature (Bentham 1983, 89–95). Although the scheme to turn *Chrestomathia* into an actual school was ultimately abandoned, some establishments were independently founded upon similar principles, including the Hazelwood School at Edgbaston in Birmingham in 1819 and the Bruce Castle School at Tottenham in 1825, both set up by Thomas Wright Hill and his sons (Smith and Burston 1983, xvii–xviii).

At the same time that James Mill was working on *Chrestomathia* with Bentham, he was engaged in the education of his eldest son. John Stuart was born in 1806 and was educated at home according to a chrestomathic programme of his father’s devising, emphasising languages, history, logic and the sciences, and excluding religion and the arts. John Stuart Mill’s *Autobiography*, published in 1873, was primarily a treatise about this education and its effects on him, recounting the astonishingly rigorous intellectual training he received at the hands of his severe Calvinist-turned-utilitarian father during the 1800s and 1810s. Young John was learning ancient Greek at three; reading Plato’s dialogues in Greek at seven; Latin

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histories at eight; Pope's English translation of the *Iliad* (twenty or thirty times) around the age of ten; and in his eleventh and twelfth years writing a book-length history of the government of ancient Rome. John Stuart Mill's childhood was, in other words, an extended utilitarian experiment in the possibilities of a purely intellectual training carried out by a man who shared at least some of the beliefs and temperament of both Bentham and Gradgrind. Mill wrote of his father:

> For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. 'The intense' was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great stress laid upon feeling…. He resembled most Englishmen in being ashamed of the signs of feeling, and by the absence of demonstration, starving the feelings themselves (Mill 1873, 49, 52).

An education conducted on principles such as these, and by a man such as this, was inevitably directed towards the reasoning faculty alone, to the exclusion of feeling and imagination. As we shall see below, the impact of this fancy-free educational experiment on John Stuart Mill was considerable and led him to adopt a quite different view of feeling and emotion himself.

James Mill was not the direct inspiration for the figure of Mr Gradgrind, even though he and the Benthamites were certainly possessed of a large measure of the Gradgrind spirit (Fielding 1956). The Gradgrind approach combined utilitarian rationalist ideology on the one hand with the practice of mechanical fact-cramming on the other. This latter tendency, a common feature of both the 'Lancasterian' and the 'National' schools, which both used the monitorial system, was widely observed and frequently denounced by educational commentators in the nineteenth century. In an 1834 article on 'Reform in education', John Stuart Mill, drawing on a series of lectures delivered by the Reverend Edward Biber in 1829, complained bitterly about the practice of rote-learning in the National schools, which resulted in children memorising words and mottoes, without having any idea what the words meant (Biber 1830; Mill 1984). In 1861, the Newcastle Report contained many similar complaints about cramming and rote-learning (Education Commission, 1861). Herbert Spencer, in his first book, *Social statics*, imagined with horror the extension of such practices into a system of state education (a development which he passionately opposed), envisaging

> a state-machine, made up of masters, ushers, inspectors, and councils, to be worked by a due proportion of taxes, and to be plentifully supplied with raw material, in the shape of little boys and girls, out of which it is to grind a population of well-trained men and women, who shall be 'useful members of the community'! (Spencer 1851, 335)

Spencer deplored this sort of mechanical grinding out of little Gradgrinds, and especially the idea that tax-payers would foot the bill for these fact factories. He also wrote, in more general terms, that any morally beneficial education must be an 'an education which is emotional', making a child not only understand but feel the difference between right and wrong. Such an education would arouse noble desires and sympathetic impulses in a way

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that no ‘drilling in catechisms’ could ever effect: ‘Only by repeatedly awakening the appropriate *emotions* can character be changed. Mere ideas received by the intellect, meeting no response from within – having no roots there – are quite inoperative upon conduct, and are quickly forgotten upon entering into life’ (Spencer 1851, 352).

Love and intelligence: Samuel Wilderspin

Herbert Spencer’s advocacy of an education addressed to the sympathies and impulses of the child was, of course, nothing new in 1851. That violent passions should be subdued and benevolent affections cultivated was a commonplace of moral philosophy, both ancient and modern (Dixon 2003, 2006, 2011a). One eighteenth-century statement of this view, connecting it explicitly with questions about the schooling of children, is to be found in the work by Lord Kames mentioned above, *Loose hints upon education* (1781). In that work Kames described the human mind as a rich soil productive of both weeds and flowers: bad passions and impressions were weeds to be rooted out, while good passions and affections were flowers to be cultivated (1–2). While it became quite conventional during the nineteenth century to argue that the whole mind needed education, imagination as well as reason, emotions as well as intellect, what was not agreed was how, where and by whom this should be achieved. In 1781, Kames had assumed that it would be overwhelmingly be the duty of the mother, in the home, through moral and religious instruction. However Kames seemed to think that in an ideal society the affections might be cultivated at school, noting with regret that there was currently ‘no school, public or private, for teaching the art of cultivating the heart’ (Kames 1781, 8). By the early nineteenth century, however, this was starting to change.

Samuel Wilderspin (1791-1866) was a pioneer of infant education and one of the central figures in the Infant School Society founded in 1824 (McCann and Young 1982; McCann 2008). Wilderspin has been credited with introducing the playground to nineteenth-century schools. He also endorsed the view that education was most successful when it engaged the attention and affection of the child. Wilderspin’s influential book, *Infant Education: or, Practical Remarks on the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor*, first published in 1825, offered guidance, based on Wilderspin’s own experience of running infant schools as well as his commitment to Swedenborgian views of religion, human nature, and education, according to which infancy was a state of innocence, characterised by wonder and curiosity. Wilderspin contrasted his own system with that developed by Andrew Bell and adopted by the Church of England, explaining how his system differed both ‘in spirit and practice from the National Schools’:

> The fundamental principle of the Infant School system is love; it should be the constant endeavour of the master to win the affections of the children, and thus cause them to feel pleasure in submitting to his will; their attention should be excited by external natural objects, no part, however trivial, being suffered to pass unnoticed; they are by this minute mode of instruction led to a habit of observation and thought, from which the most beneficial results may be expected (Wilderspin 1829, 311–12).

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Wilderspin added that the National Schools ‘deaden the faculties of the children, by obliging them to commit to memory the observations of others, few of which they comprehend: they are never invited to think for themselves and the injurious consequences arising from this radical defect, cannot but be felt through life’ (312). In Wilderspin’s schoolroom, by contrast, children were to be engaged in conversation about moral matters through the use of a gallery of images. Whether teaching infants the letters of the alphabet or the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, Wilderspin introduced them to ideas about understanding, feeling, passion, and affection. The following is one of a series of lessons proposed by Wilderspin to help children learn the alphabet. The object used as the focus of this particular lesson would have been a card bearing the letter ‘X’ and also a portrait of the Greek author Xenophon. Wilderspin envisaged the following conversation between the schoolmaster and his young charges:

Q. What letter is this?

A. Letter X, for Xenophon, a man's name.

Q. What was the particular character of Xenophon ?

A. He was very courageous.

Q. What does courageous mean ?

A. To be afraid to do harm but not to be afraid to do good or anything that is right.

Q. What is the greatest courage ?

A. To conquer our own bad passions and bad inclinations.

Q. Is he a courageous man that can conquer his bad passions.

A. Yes; because they are the most difficult to conquer. (183)

These kinds of lessons were aimed at improving simultaneously the moral and intellectual condition of the ‘infant poor’ between the ages of eighteen months and seven years. In writing of the benefits of this approach, Wilderspin explained the good influence it would have ‘on the child’s moral condition, or more properly its heart’: ‘The better feelings of the child must gradually become most prominent, since they are constantly excited, while the bad passions are put and kept in subjection by this more and more predominating influence’ (312).

Wilderspin’s approach was firmly rooted in the Christian tradition of moral instruction, but his work was admired by secular as well as religious commentators. Charles Bray, for instance, a rationalist admirer of phrenology, and a supporter on non-denominational education, was an enthusiastic pioneer of Wilderspin’s system, which he helped to introduce to Coventry in the 1830s (Jolly 1894, xi). Bray was himself the author of a widely used and republished work on *The education of the feelings*, first published in 1838. John Stuart Mill wrote approvingly of the infant school movement in his 1834 article on ‘Reform in education’. He admired the infant schools as places of moral culture ‘designed exclusively for the cultivation of the kindly affections’; places where the ‘child learned nothing, in the vulgar sense of learning, but only learned to live’. Mill quoted Biber’s summary of the original aim of the infant schools to take in the infants of the poor at the tenderest age and

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'to awaken them to a life of love and intelligence'. But even the infant schools, Mill reported, through the 'dulness, hardness, and miserable vanity' of some of the schoolmasters, had all too often become places 'for parroting gibberish' (Mill 1984, 70–1; Biber 1830, 172–7).

Beauty, feeling, and understanding: John Stuart Mill

If Wilderspin was one of the nineteenth century's most eloquent advocates of a particular kind of Christian moral culture of the passions and affections, John Stuart Mill was the most powerful proponent of a rather different school of thought. He offered his Victorian readers a romantic and aesthetic renovation of the utilitarian philosophy to which he had been subjected in its Benthamite form as a child. Where some educators sternly emphasised restraint of the passions, Mill promoted the gentler art of cultivating appropriate moral sentiments and aesthetic feelings. The connection between emotion and aesthetics has been a close one ever since the 'emotions' and the 'emotional' first emerged as distinct psychological domains in the nineteenth century (Dixon 2011a). One of the earliest uses of the adjective 'emotional' was in an essay by Mill published in 1834 about Plato's *Phaedrus*. In that article Mill suggested that the English word 'emotional' was synonymous with 'aesthetic' (Mill 1978, 95). A reviewer of John Lucas Tupper's *Hiatus: The void in modern education, its causes and antidote* (1869), already mentioned above, complained that in his book Tupper likewise treated 'emotional' and 'aesthetic' as synonymous (Anon. 1869). The young philosopher Charles Waldstein went further, making a direct connection between aesthetics, emotions and social reform, arguing that any man whose emotions were educated through public performances of drama and music, thereafter would not be inclined to 'commit a theft, a robbery, or any brutal outrage' (1878, 195). Dickens's preferred medium for the education of the imagination and affections, of course, was literature. In *Hard Times*, Mr Gradgrind is affronted and baffled by the phenomenon of the Coketown public library at which readers, even after a fifteen-hour working day, would sit down to 'read mere fables about men and women' by Defoe and Goldsmith, and learn thereby about 'human nature, human passions, human hopes and fears' (Dickens 1996, 87). Fifteen years later, in an address to the Birmingham and Midland Institute, which provided local working men with a library, reading room, museum, art department, lectures and classes, Dickens congratulated the institute that in encouraging the artisan to think it also 'encourages him to feel' (Dickens 1869).

Dickens, Tupper, Mill, and Waldstein were the Victorian ancestors of an argument, made regularly during the last century and a half, that the teaching of literature, drama, art and music in schools is essential to the cultivation of appropriate feelings and sentiments. The French educational theorist Gabriel Compayré, in reappraising the value of Herbert Spencer as an educational philosopher in the early twentieth century, complained that Spencer too often prioritised practical and intellectual training over education in literature and the fine arts, thus failing to provide for the 'training of the emotions and the sentiments of the heart' (1907, 39). Compayré's own belief was that aesthetic culture was indispensible, not a merely recreational domain: 'Aesthetics are not merely the crown of civilization; they are its foundation, one of the essential principles of intellectual life' (42–3). In more recent decades, educationalists including David Best (1988, 1992) and Geoffrey Bantock have also

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written about the connection between arts education and emotional development. As Bantock puts it, the arts are the mode through which feelings can best be articulated and refined; they are our 'public vehicles of the emotions' (1986, 138). Sir Jim Rose, in his *Independent review of the primary curriculum* (2009), especially recommends role-play, drama, and dance as ways to develop social and emotional skills.

Although the younger Mill, unlike the younger Gradgrind, did not find himself turning to crime in later life, he nonetheless blamed his artless education for its harmful effects on his emotional development. In his early twenties, Mill experienced a mental crisis and severe depression, which he would later interpret as the direct result of his father's educational philosophy. The over-development of his powers of intellectual analysis, Mill believed, had tended to wear away his feelings. His emotions were eventually saved by a course of artistic auto-didacticism during 1827 and 1828. Through the poetry of William Wordsworth, the music of the German composer Carl Maria von Weber, and the *Mémoires* of the French author Jean-François Marmontel, Mill rediscovered in himself the sources of human feeling (Mill 1873, 140–52). Tellingly, Mill recalled that it was the scene in Marmontel's *Mémoires* where the author's father died that moved him to tears (141). Reading about the death of Marmontel's father, we might surmise, effected for Mill the symbolical death of his own father; the thought that all feeling was dead within him now vanished. 'The cultivation of the feelings,' Mill recalled, 'became one of the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophical creed' (143–4). Mill tried to impress on his English contemporaries something which he thought was widely appreciated in Continental Europe: that the 'habitual exercise of the feelings' leads to the 'general culture of the understanding' (59). An emotional apprehension of an object in the world, Mill argued, was entirely consistent with 'the most accurate knowledge and most perfect practical recognition of all its physical and intellectual laws and relations':

> The intensest feeling of the beauty of a cloud lighted by the setting sun, is no hindrance to my knowing that the cloud is vapour of water, subject to all the laws of vapours in a state of suspension; and I am just as likely to allow for, and act on, these physical laws whenever there is occasion to do so, as if I had been incapable of perceiving any distinction between beauty and ugliness (152).

In Mill, then, we find a classic articulation of two related views about education and the emotions which, again, have been rediscovered by philosophers and educationalists in recent decades (Solomon 1976; Best 1988; Dunlop 1984; Nussbaum 2001). First, Mill's self-exploration in his *Autobiography* suggested that any overly factual and intellectual curriculum that excluded the arts would risk creating an unbalanced and unhealthy because unfeeling mind. Having made this distinction, between the arts and emotion on the one hand and scientific learning and the intellect on the other, Mill wanted to deny that there was any incompatibility between these two aspects of mental life: more feeling did not equate to less understanding.

Science, religion and the languages of emotion after 1870

My main aim in this article, so far, has been to establish continuities between contemporary debates about emotions in education and discussions that took place during the nineteenth

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century. There are striking parallels in the aims and ideas of educationalists then and now, including quite widespread support for the general idea of educating the whole child, emotions as well as intellect, with a view to producing good citizens, fewer crimes, and a happier society. But there are important differences too, which have come about through intertwined conceptual and social changes which can be mapped through the evolving languages of emotional education. The kind of moral and religious instruction promoted by a range of educational thinkers, from Kames to Wilderspin and many others, and practiced in Britain in schools provided by the Christian churches, involved teaching children to master their ‘passions’ and cultivate their ‘affections’. After 1870, when the state took its first steps towards providing non-denominational education, first at elementary and then at secondary level, a new conceptual regime, derived from the nascent science of psychology, started to take over, premised on a stark contrast between intellect and the newly all-encompassing and secular category of the ‘emotions’ (Dixon 2003, forthcoming). These processes accelerated during the middle decades of the twentieth century, seeing a commitment to moral education being replaced by ideas about child development and child guidance based on science, psychoanalysis, and medicine (Shuttleworth 2010; Stewart 2009; Wooldridge 2006). This period saw ‘moral’ giving way to ‘social and emotional’, and ‘education’ or ‘instruction’ being replaced by ‘growth’, ‘development’, ‘adjustment’, and, more recently, ‘management’, ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’, the latter categories betraying the impact of the corporate world on educational theory and practice. Comparing the 1967 Plowden Report with the Rose Review of 2009 suggests a broad shift from biology and psychoanalysis in the former to self-help psychology, management and economics in the latter as the leading sources of ideas about the mind. The impact of Daniel Goleman’s advocacy of ‘emotional intelligence’ in the 1990s resulted from his successful fusion of pop-neuroscience with the modern self-help ideology of global capitalism, trends which were already having a worldwide impact on social and educational thought (Boler 1999, 58–78).

Again, we can try to understand these recent developments by comparing them with what was happening in the nineteenth century. I have already noted that there was disagreement about who should be primarily responsible for educating children’s emotions. The two most obvious candidates were the family (especially the mother) or the school. It made a great difference, however, whether the school was a religious or a secular institution. It was relatively uncontroversial to think that a religious institution should be in the business of the moral instruction and training of the young, but less clear that this was a role for the state to take over. Herbert Spencer, we have seen, argued strongly in favour of the view that a child must be educated through their emotions as much as their intellect, but he was violently opposed to the state providing such instruction: ‘from all legislative attempts at emotional education may Heaven defend us!’ (Spencer 1851, 352). Spencer’s invocation of heaven was appropriate, since it was the religious question that was to prove most the most important and divisive element of the debates about the 1870 Elementary Education Act, with its proposed introduction of non-denominational state schools.

Contributions to these debates by figures with scientific and secularist leanings attempted to inaugurate a new social and conceptual configuration developed from the kind of attitudes previously promoted by philosophical radicals of the Benthamite school. Instead of denying the value of the feelings and emotions altogether, however, later Victorians such as John

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Stuart Mill's protégé, the philosopher-psychologist Alexander Bain, and the secularist leader George J. Holyoake, argued that emotions should be excluded from the classroom because they fell within the proper province of religion and thus should be dealt with at home and at Sunday schools rather than in non-denominational state schools. The argument thus aimed simultaneously to see the state adopt a secular kind of schooling and also to exclude emotions from the classroom. George Holyoake stated, at the inaugural meeting of the National Education League in 1869 that the proper aim of the new state schools should not be 'education in its full sense', including all the influences of 'home, and church, and society, which form the individual character', but rather should provide the children of the working classes simply with a good 'intellectual training'. Striking a keynote that would have pleased Mr Gradgrind, Holyoake continued: 'Secular instruction, if adopted, will deal, during that brief term, merely with the mechanical routine of elementary knowledge, and the passionless facts of science'. For the rest, the state system should leave children to the teachers of religion, whose province was the domain of human experience where 'emotions arise' and 'passions are stirred which pertain to eternity'. This was the realm of 'the nurse, the mother, and the minister' (National Education League 1869, 169). Alexander Bain, in his *Education as a science*, made exactly the same argument:

> the essence of Religion must always be something Emotional; and the culture of Emotion is not carried on advantageously in ordinary school teaching. The system that is best for securing the intellectual element, is not best for securing the emotional element. Regularity of lesson, method and sequence, a certain rigour of discipline – are all in favour of a steady progress in knowledge; but the calling out and exercising of warm affection, or deep feeling, depend on improving opportunities or events such as scarcely occur in school experience (Bain, 1879, 423).

The Irish physicist and agnostic John Tyndall (1874, 60–1), and the radical educationalist and economist William B. Hodgson (Education Commission, 1861, 551) had both previously endorsed similar views. It is intriguing to note, then, that the attempt to exclude emotional education from the classroom seems to be connected with Victorian secularists' attempts in the 1860s and 1870s to exclude religion. Emotion, for these latter-day Gradgrinds, was the province of 'the nurse, the mother, and the minister', and was to be banished from the schoolroom, a domain of 'mechanical routine' and the 'passionless facts of science'.

Conclusion: Beyond the Gradgrind inheritance

It is ironic that, as attitudes to emotion changed, gradually from the 1960s and even more markedly since the 1990s, it was to brain science, evolutionary psychology, business science, economics, social psychology and psychiatry that educators and policy-makers turned for the authority and the means to reintroduce the emotions into the classroom, those very emotions that a secularist and scientific ethos had done so much to detach from the intellect during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 'Moral education' has been replaced by a curriculum that promotes 'social and emotional development', but any curriculum designed to promote particular feelings and emotional capacities (whether love of country, fear of

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terrorism, empathy, optimism, altruism, charity, or happiness) is tacitly committed to a particular moral philosophy, a particular vision of the good life. Moral beliefs are now smuggled into the classroom as part of supposedly value-free and scientific pedagogical programmes rather than as components of an explicitly moral training (Boler 1999, 79–107).

I suggested at the outset that no educator in the twenty-first century was likely to repeat the mistake, memorably embodied in Mr Gradgrind's passion for facts, of seeking to exclude feelings and emotions from the educational process. However, the repression of feeling was not Mr Gradgrind's only mistake. Dickens also invited readers of *Hard Times* to find fault in Gradgrind's mania for science and measurement. Gradgrind was possessed by the Benthamite desire to see everything counted, quantified, statistically tabulated, and mathematically analysed. The mechanical and arithmetical mindset that might be suited to running a factory or a business, Dickens suggested, was not well suited to the rather different endeavour of educating the young.

I wonder what Mr Gradgrind's approach would be today to the question of promoting emotional wellbeing and resilience through education. I imagine that he would make sure he was up to date with the latest scientific terminology, and that he would be well versed in neuroscience, management science, positive psychology, and their techniques for subjecting happiness and wellbeing to quantitative measurement (Nussbaum 2008). He would insist that public policy in this area be based only on facts; facts derived from empirical data-sets; facts generated by randomised controlled trials; facts expressed in terms of hardwired neurological affect programmes. He would seek, from any programme of emotional education, a package of activities that could be mechanically, identically, practiced in every classroom in the land, regardless of the fanciful foibles of individual teachers or the cultural inheritance of individual children. His favoured programme would be monitored constantly through the use of 'emotional metrics' and 'global assessment tests' measuring emotional fitness and emotional health (Cornum 2012). He would thus impose a single pedagogical scheme and a universal emotional language. In short, our modern Mr Gradgrind would hope to see a veritable machine of state-sponsored emotional education set in motion, grinding out useful members of the community from the raw material of little boys and girls.

If any of this sounds familiar, then it is perhaps a salutary warning that there are many among those who favour emotional education today, as well as among those who resist it, who are Mr Gradgrind's true heirs. The scientific study of the emotions, of course, has its place, but its underlying methodological assumptions that such things as 'human nature' or 'basic emotions' exist universally, does not suit it to educational thought or practice. In classrooms in the real world, each child's emotions are produced through particular cultural, linguistic and intellectual schemes, within particular social systems, as part of a singular biographical narrative, not by the triggering of hardwired basic affective responses. As Dickens put it in a sentence in the original manuscript of *Hard Times* omitted from the final text: 'It may be one of the difficulties of casting up and ticking off human figures by the hundred thousand that they have their individual varieties of affection and passions which are of so perverse a nature that they will not come under any rule into the account' (Dickens 1996, 458). What is required, then, perhaps, is a framework for emotional education in which children can produce their own meanings, and develop their own emotional

languages, rather than having imposed upon them a universalising scheme based on the version of human nature promoted by the most fashionable science of the moment (Dixon 2011b).

Studying the history of ideas about the culture of the heart confronts us with certain basic philosophical questions, fundamental to the decisions we collectively take about education, and have taken in the past, but which often remain hidden. Let me end by posing these questions anew: What do we think is the relationship between intellect and emotion? Is there a dichotomy between them or was John Stuart Mill right that cultivating the feelings and training the intellect can and should go hand in hand? What are the proper roles of feeling and emotion in the well lived life? What are the best sources of understanding and knowledge about emotions? If we think that feeling rightly is as important as thinking profoundly and that both need to be learned, who should be responsible for providing the required emotional training: parents, schools, community groups, religious organisations, or can all be left to nature? Should happiness and wellbeing be aimed at directly, through programmes in emotional literacy and resilience, or indirectly through the teaching of, for instance, literature, drama, music, art, and moral philosophy? Do we believe in a universal human nature and hardwired basic emotions, and, if not, what alternative models of mental life and development are available to us?

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